

PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN  
9 OCTOBER 1977

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 16

# Turner Walks Narrow in Remaking CIA Image

*This is the first of two articles on problems in the Central Intelligence Agency and how its new director is to solve them.*

By JOHN J. FARMER  
and JOSEPH R. DAUGHEN  
Of The Bulletin Staff

Langley, Va. — President Carter's pledge to reorganize the Federal Government is getting its toughest test behind closed doors at the Central Intelligence Agency.

Failure to provide effective safeguards against the excesses of the past could lead to serious embarrassments for Carter, or worse, a major diplomatic confrontation.

But an overreaction in the direction of reform could destroy agency morale, cripple vital intelligence operations, and leave the nation vulnerable to undetected Soviet military or political advances.

The man charged with treading this narrow line, Adm. Stansfield Turner, the new CIA director, talked about the problem and his seven months in office during a lengthy interview with the Bulletin in his office here.

"What I'm doing is trying to manage this place so that I know what's going on," he said. "It's big and that's difficult and there's no formula I can give you that says I guarantee I know everything sensitive that's going on."

At the same time, he warned that any CIA directors or employees found withholding vital information from superiors will be fired — as three have been, Turner said, since he took office March 9.

He outlined these steps he said have been taken to guard against a repeat of the illegal activities and loose administration that critics have cited in recent years:

— 820 employees of the covert and clandestine branch of the CIA — the "dirty trick" directorate — will be discharged over the next 26 months. All are employed in the United States and were described by Turner as part of the "fat" in the agency, much of it left over from Vietnam. Covert operations, he said, are less important today compared to careful "analytical"

President and subsequent "timely" notification to eight committees of Congress.

—"Competitive analysis" is being stressed to insure that the President gets "reasoned dissenting views" on intelligence questions, not merely the CIA's consensus finding or recommendation. To oversee this, Turner has brought in a new man, professor Robert R. Bowie of Harvard.

Critics of the agency have charged, however, that the White House, rather than exercising restraint on the CIA, has pressed it frequently to undertake questionable missions — assassination attempts and political coups, such as the toppling of the Allende regime in Chile.

Turner conceded that this "was a serious problem in the agency's past."

He spoke of orders "often handled through informal channels . . . you know, you could have a telephone call right out to here, or something like that, that would bypass the system."

The director refused to name those who had misused the agency, but critics have accused former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger of unduly influencing agency estimates and activities during his years in Washington. Turner insisted such transgressions are unlikely today.

"I think the procedure for approving activities of the CIA have become much more institutionalized," Turner said, "which means there will be a number of people who will feel a sense of responsibility to get up and say to somebody who's trying to make us do something, we shouldn't. You're on a wrong track. Mr. Secretary of State, Mr. President, Mr. Whoever it is."

Would Turner seriously consider challenging the President on such an issue?

"If there were anything illegal in what he was talking about . . . I would have to resign before I would do it," Turner declared.

At another point in the interview, Turner added, "There's no question that if somebody comes and tells me to go assassinate somebody, I'll resign before I even contemplate it, because there's a presidential order out saying don't do it" and because of "my own conviction that it is not a useful tool

But what were not morally?

If I low our st debate it said. "A President h to sit back That's the

be prepar Through

returned to

have been "institutionalized," that knowledge of wrongdoing within the CIA can no longer be confined to a few overzealous operatives, that Congress has acquired a larger oversight role.

"You still have the backstop that even if I didn't have the right guts," Turner insisted, "it still goes to eight (congressional) committees. And the Intelligence Oversight Board would get word of it at this point — almost undoubtedly."

"All these people would be in the act and if I were right and the President was wrong, he'd find a lot of pressure on him," Turner said.

Outside the agency, critics remain skeptical that the CIA, often described as the President's "private army," can withstand White House pressure to undertake unwise, immoral or even illegal operations.

Sen. Clifford P. Case (R-NJ), a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee preparing legislation that will give the CIA a new "charter," was hopeful but plainly pessimistic. "It's my hope the agency can be brought under proper control," he said in an interview, "but, well, how can you know?"

In the last analysis, the responsibility falls on Turner himself, as he conceded.

"It's going to depend on the moral fortitude of the guy at that desk," he commented, pointing across the room to his own desk.

"He's got to have the fortitude to tell his superiors — wherever they are — no, and he's got to have the determination to tell his subordinates, don't run around pretending you're going to do things without my knowing it because you don't want me to know it."